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Reagan's MX Defeat and What Will He Dare Call

"Soviet political influence operations are designed to cultivate contacts with political, business, academic, and journalistic leaders, and secure their collaboration. This does not necessarily require the actual recruitment of the individual; only his cooperation. Typically, the Soviets will play upon such themes as peace, disarmament, détente, and peaceful coexistence to secure this cooperation. . . . The major objective of these exercises is to inject the Soviet force into foreign government, political, business, labor, and academic dialogue in a non-attributable or at least non-official manner."

—Edward J. O'Malley, FBI assistant director for intelligence, in testimony to the House Select Committee on Intelligence, July 14, 1982

"All I'm saying is that one must look to see whether, well-intentioned though it may be, this [freeze] movement might be carrying water that they're not aware of, for another purpose. Incidentally, the first man who proposed the nuclear freeze was . . . Leonid Brezhnev."

—Ronald Reagan, Oval Office press conference, December 10, 1982

WASHINGTON, D.C.—At the start of last week, the Reagan administration was dealt a major setback by the House in the form of the vote against \$988 million in requested funding for five MX missiles—the first defeat for a weapons request in Congress since World War II, and a triumph for the freeze. By the end of the week, the long-awaited backup for Reagan's claims that the freeze movement had been infiltrated by the KGB turned out to be a damp squib, too, with the report of the House Select Committee on Intelligence receiving scanty and adverse publicity in the press.

First, the MX vote, in the light of a sequence of contradictory decisions by the House of Representatives: On Tuesday the full House was faced with a Pentagon request for \$988 million to build five MX missiles in FY 83, which runs from October 1982 through September 1983. The request had squeaked through the House Appropriations Committee on a tie vote. The lobbying campaign by the freeze groups, led by the churches, SANE, and the Council for a Livable World, had—by the time the vote was taken—flooded hundreds upon hundreds of telephone calls from members' districts to the legislators, pondering which way to vote.

The victory—by a 245-176 margin—demonstrated that the freeze organizers had acquired political skills and made a quantum jump beyond the peace-and-apple pie resolutions of the November ballots. But the next day the House voted \$2.5 billion for continued research and development of the MX missile. Now, there is as yet nowhere that the Air Force can put the MX—termed by Reagan the "Peacekeeper"—because even if the "Densepack" basing mode in Wyoming is approved, it will be some time before it is ready. So as things stand, there will not be much use for the five MX missiles whose funding was denied on Tuesday. The funds approved Wednesday will keep the MX program going.

Thus, in terms of funding, the MX program has not been seriously affected. The House (with the Senate yet to vote) has not stopped the program. However, there are two beneficial consequences of Tuesday's vote. The aerospace industry will not have nearly \$1 billion to waste, and we have the singular instance of Congress denying money to the president and the Pentagon. The spectacle of the Joint Chiefs admitting the following day that three out of five of them were against Densepack—publicly embarrassing the administration—was another serious setback for Reagan and Weinberger, and perhaps a signal that the Pentagon itself is having doubts about the desirability of locking up at least \$25 billion in this particular system.

For the groups in the freeze movement which are focused on attacking specific weapons systems such as MX, the immediate task now is to bring pressure on the Senate. All last weekend staff and volunteers manned phone banks at SANE and other organizations, drumming up opposition. In the new Congress in January the effort probably will shift to the armed services committees, for a vote against Densepack. In the spring, when the Congress takes up authorization for FY 84, the emphasis will be on killing the Euro-missiles, with the Pershing II—a ludicrous failure in tests so far and already denied some funding as a result—looking possibly vulnerable. The Cruise is a different story. Other systems, such as B1, the F18, and the M1 tank, sailed through the House last week without demur.

On Thursday the House Select Intelligence Committee's report was unveiled, with committee chairman Edward Boland saying that it showed that Reagan's claims that the freeze movement had been the cat's-paw of the Soviet Union were false. "Soviet agents," Boland concluded, "have had no significant influence on the nuclear freeze movement. The bottom line is that the hearings provide no evidence that the Soviets direct, manage or manipulate the nuclear freeze movement."

The 337-page sanitized hearing-record released last Thursday is in fact a comic saga, whose principal players are John McMahon, deputy director of the CIA, Edward J. O'Malley of the FBI, and—in a cameo performance—Stanislav Levchenko, a former KGB major who defected to the U.S. in 1979.

Levchenko was an "active measures" specialist, serving in Tokyo under the guise of being a correspondent for the Soviet magazine *New Times*. He is the pride and joy of the CIA since he is proclaimed to be the first Soviet "active measures" man to defect. "Active measures," McMahon told the committee, are "used primarily in the intelligence context to distinguish influence operations from espionage and counterespionage. . . . In other words, our old friends agitprop and disinformation."

Levchenko's present responsibilities are large. Reagan's belief that the Soviets are behind the freeze has partially reposed on his information. In the country a month ago was Ko Shioya, head of the *Reader's Digest* Japanese edition. *Reader's Digest* itself had already published a smear on the freeze, on which Reagan relied heavily. Ko Shioya announced that the freeze movement in Japan was thoroughly penetrated by the Soviets. He also boasted that he had spent time with Reagan, revealing such Soviet maneuvers to him. At the base of this pyramid of innuendo is Levchenko.

Levchenko went to Tokyo in 1975, and worked there for the KGB, meeting a few deadlines for *New Times* in the process. Claiming 25 clandestine meetings a month with 10 agents, including a prominent member of the Socialist Party and four mainline Japanese journalists, Levchenko had his hands full.

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